TRANSLATOR: AMAYU
PROOFREADER: EMIKO YUUKI
CLEANER: KUREHA, RIN, SHINGO
TYPESETTER: KUREHA

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# 王国の子

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講談社

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One country's cruel custom.
"leading the life of a stand-in....." Away from the center of the city in a theater, an actor, a boy called Robert, is asked to become the stand-in of Elisabeth who has the right of succeeding to the throne. "I will definitely survive and come back--". Is Robert to be swallowed by the things to come as the wheel of fortune starts to spin? Deceit, traps, hatred. The long-awaited 1st volume that portrays human relationships tainted with greed.

ITAN

びっけ 好評既刊
赤の世界

# 千年の子

講談社

child of the kingdom

nekko presents

# 王国の子

child of the kingdom

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KODANSHA

# CONTENTS


4TH CHAPTER — A candidate for stand-in — 123

3RD CHAPTER — The decision — 73

2ND CHAPTER — Parting — 39

1ST CHAPTER — Another shadow — 5

LADY ELISABETH,
IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY TELL, THE POWERFUL NATION NERUTO IN THE NORTH ATTACKED?
WE'RE SAFE HERE. FATHER WILL RETURN FROM THE EXPEDITION TO THE WEST IMMEDIATELY.
flap
flap

O-NEE-SAMA
glance
THE COURT IS IN TURMOIL. I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?
Dear God...
Please protect us
Dear God
Dear God...
MARY O-NEE-SAMA...
GO AWAY!

ELISABETH!!
STEPMOTHER...
OH, ELISABETH ...
THE KING IS BACK.
STEPMOTHER, THERE'S BLOOD ON YOUR DRESS...

IS FATHER WELL?
...
FOOTSTEPS
WE'LL SOON BE FACING THE COUNTRY OF NERUTO IN BATTLE.
FATHER?
PLEASE, I BEG YOU, HENRY IS IN RECOVERY RIGHT NOW...
IF HE WERE TO TRAVEL THERE, HIS WOULD WOULD OPEN AGAIN AND THE BLEEDING WON'T STOP. HE IS COMPLETELY UNABLE TO GO OFF TO THE FRONT!

Shaken by the rumor about the king being shot to death, our troops regained their fighting spirit when they saw the king.
PLEASE LEAVE IT TO ME. I WILL SHOW YOU I CAN PLAY MY ROLE AS STAND-IN!
THE RUMOR THAT HENRY DIED IN BATTLE DURING THE EXPEDITION TO THE POWERFUL OUSTEN IN THE WEST SEEMS TO HAVE SPREAD ...
LET US SHOW THEM THAT KING HENRY IS ALIVE AND WELL, AND LIFT THE SPIRIT OF OUR SOLDIERS.
We repelled the enemy who were about to invade our territory.

How very cruel the protocol is...
At any rate, I was at least confirmed the importance of their existence.
that the king, our troops and the army of the enemy had seen was not the real king.
Me and my little brother understood that the rumor spread by the enemy was not a lie.
That the blood on my stepmother's dress was the king's.

THE COURT... IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HUH.
I HAVEN'T COME HERE SINCE I'VE GONE OFF TO UNIVERSITY.
SUDDENLY SENDING FOR ME, WHAT DOES MY OLD MAN WANT?
SIGH
I WONDER IF ELISABETH IS FINE. HOW OLD IS SHE NOW? SINCE SHE'S TEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME, SHE MUST ALREADY BE 11.
A REQUEST? FOR ME?

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU WERE DIRECTLY NOMINATED BY THE KING FOR THAT MISSION.
THIS KIND OF THING, WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO TALK ABOUT IT AT HOME? WHY DID YOU CALL ME ALL THE WAY OUT TO THE COURT?
ME?
Whisper
WHAT'S WITH THAT...
HASN'T THE CURRENT KING, EXCEPT FOR PRINCE EDWARD, STUBBORNLY DENIED CHILDREN BORN OF DIFFERENT MOTHERS THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION?
EVEN THOUGH, WHY...
THE TRUTH IS, THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION FOR ELISABETH-SAMA AND MARY-SAMA

SHE WAS KIND ENOUGH TO REMEMBER YOU.
YOU, THE SON OF THE ROYAL CLOAKROOM ATTENDANT OF CATHERINE-SAMA.
AND SUGGEST THIS MISSION
Richard Cecil's son William will graduate from university soon won't he?
MISSION
He divorced his 4th queen half a year after the marriage.
His first queen died after the king had a change of mind and divorced her.
Zentoren's recent king Henry was married 6 times.
THAT THE 6TH QUEEN WILL BE KING HENRY'S LAST QUEEN...
IS A PLAUSIBLE RUMOR.
His 5th queen was executed for adultery.
The 2nd queen was charged with adultery and executed
His 6th queen is the kind hearted Catherine.
The 3rd queen died giving birth to a child
QUEEN CATHERINE HAS CONVINCED THE KING.
SHE IS SUCH AN AFFECTIONATE PERSON. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT CONNECTED BY BLOOD SHE LOVES THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESSES AS IF THEY WERE HER OWN CHILDREN
IF IT'S ABOUT THE KING I'VE HEARD QUITE A LOT ABOUT HIM WHILE STUDYING IN UNIVERSITY
I'VE HEARD THAT HE'S NOT IN A GOOD CONDITION.

PRINCESS MARY, THE DAUGHTER OF THE FIRST QUEEN, IS THE SECOND IN SUCCESSION
COUNTING FROM THE TOP, THE THIRD IN LINE WHO HOLDS THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION...
ELISABETH, THE DAUGHTER OF THE SECOND QUEEN, WAS GIVEN THE RIGHT AS THE THIRD IN SUCCESSION.
THE KING HAS 3 CHILDREN AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, TOO...
APART FROM PRINCE EDWARD, THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION FOR THE TWO PRINCESSES HAS CHANGED AS WELL...
YEAH, THERE HAS TO BE A STAND-IN.
Hase
SO, I'VE BEEN CHOSEN AS THE ONE IN CHARGE OF THE TASK TO LOOK FOR THAT STAND-IN.

DUE TO THE INJURY OF TWO YEARS AGO, KING HENRY'S CONDITION HAS SERIOUSLY WORSENED. HE HAS GROWN LESS WILLING TO TAKE CHANCES
THEREFORE HE THINKS ABOUT EDWARD-SAMA WHO WILL BE THE YOUNG KING AFTER HIS DEATH AND AS FOR HIS AUTHORITY, WHAT RECENTLY CAUGT HIS ATTENTION IS THE THE LAW OF SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE THAT IS SOON TO BE ENACTED
IT INCLUDES THE ARTICLES THAT EDWARD-SAMA'S SUCCESSOR TO THE THRONE WILL BE MARY-SAMA, AND AFTER HER PRINCESS ELISABETH.
BUT ISN'T IT A LITTLE FAST?
SINCE IT'S PRINCE EDWARD, ELISABETH WON'T ENTER THE BATTLEFIELD ANYWAY.
I SUPPOSE YOU'LL BE APPOINTED AS THE ONE IN CHARGE OF PRINCESS ELISABETH
YOU FOLLOWED ME AROUND AND OFTEN VISITED THE COURT WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD. YOU ALSO PLAYED WITH THE PRINCESS. THAT MAKES YOU THE CORRECT PERSON!
DEPENDING ON WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN, THE SUCCESSION MIGHT UNEXPECTEDLY CHANGE. WITHIN THE ROYAL FAMILY, YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN SOMEONE WILL BE ASSASSINATED.

HUH?
William! Is that you, William?
PRINCESS ELISABETH!
OH NO, THAT'S SO STIFF!
CALL ME ELISABETH, JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE
MOTHER TOLD ME THAT YOU'RE BACK FROM UNIVERSITY SO I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOU.
YOU SKIPPED GRADES AT UNIVERSITY AND YOU GRADUATED AT THE HEAD OF YOUR CLASS TOO
SINCE YOU'VE GRADUATED, WON'T YOU STAY HERE FOR A WHILE?

AH, I SHOULDN'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT--
OH, THAT'S TOO BAD...
UNFORTUNATELY I SUDDENLY GOT ASSIGNED TO A MISSION.
NOW YOU CAN MAKE FULL USE OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO SHOW WHAT YOU CAN DO.
Oh!! William!!
PAT

PUTTING ASIDE THAT SHE'S NOW OF AGE TO GET MARRIED, I'LL HAVE TO ROLL UP MY SLEEVES AND CHECK THE FACES OF EVERY GIRL AROUND THE AGE OF 11.
I HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE WHO LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE ELISABETH!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
WORK.. NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S ACTUALLY RUNNING ERRANDS, HUH.
AND WHEN I'VE FOUND SOMEONE, I NEED TO CONVINCE THAT PERSON BECOME A STAND-IN FOR THE ROYAL FAMILY I FEEL DEPRESSED..
CLOP
CLOP
THAT'S A REALLY
CRUEL THING TO DO.

SOMEHOW IT SEEMS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, WILLIAM

I'VE BEEN SEARCHING UP AND DOWN THE COUNTRY..
SIGH
BUT I CAN'T FIND ANYONE WHO FITS
WELL, THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S A FAIRLY DIFFICULT TASK. YOU'RE FINALLY BACK HOME, IT'S BETTER TO TAKE IT EASY!
WHAT'S WITH THAT CROWD OF PEOPLE OVER THERE?
AH, THE SMALL THEATRE THAT IS QUITE POPULAR NOW..
IT'S PRETTY INTERESTING. THE PEOPLE LOVE IT.
munch
HEH, COMEDIES?
NOT JUST THAT!
HEH
HEH

THEY'VE GOT A VERY BEAUTIFUL WOMAN ON STAGE! I THINK YOU SHOULD GO AND SEE FOR YOURSELF LATER.
SEEMS LIKE THE PLAY'S STARTED ALREADY. .
AHA HA HA HA
IT'S JUST A SLAPSTICK COMEDY.
BUT WELL, SOMEHOW
OH, IS THAT THE ENTRANCE OF THE ONE WHO YOU SAID WAS A BEAUTY?
chatter

Oooooooh!
HEY, I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!
Don't stand!
AH, SO-SORRY...
CLATTERING
ELISABETH ...!?
AH, THAT PERSON IS SO CUTELY DISGUISED, DON'T YOU THINK?
THAT GIRL... THAT PERSON IS...
THAT
LIKE, WHEN YOU REMOVE THE MAKE-UP, SHE'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON?
YOU, DON'T TELL ME YOU HAVE NO IDEA?
DISGUI-SED?

THAT'S A MAN!
?!
HEH
HEH
COME O-N, ROBERT, KEEP ME COMPANY, ONLY FOR TONIGHT-
I SAID I CAN'T! WE'VE GOT ANOTHER PLAY TOMORROW.

STEP
IT'S ALWAYS ...
OH, A GUEST?
..ARE YOU ROBERT?
STEP
STEP
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

EH?
WILL YOU COME WITH ME, PLEASE?
I'M IN CHARGE OF YOU NOW
I HAD AN AGREEMENT WITH THE THEATRE MANAGER.
HOW MUCH DID YOU PAY HIM?
I CAN'T TELL YOU RIGHT NOW.
Damn
HMPH, THAT OLD FART... EVEN THOUGH I HELPED HIM MAKE A PROFIT!
YOU-- WHAT KIND OF PERSON ARE YOU? AN ARISTOCRAT?
WHAT!?
"ALTHOUGH HE HELPED ME MAKE A PROFIT, THAT CHEEKY BOY HAS BECOME CUMBERSOME" IS WHAT THE THEATER MANAGER SAID.

PLEASE TRUST ME. THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU HAVE LOST YOUR JOB.
IF YOU ARE WORRIED TO LEAVE YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER WHO'S SUFFERING FROM AN ILLNESS BEHIND, I PROMISE YOU THAT HE WILL GET THE BEST TREATMENT POSSIBLE, REST ASSURED.
SO YOU WERE INVESTIGATING ME?
WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?
YOU WILL ACCOMPANY ME TO THE COURT.

William!
PRINCESS.
PLEASE FORGIVE ME THAT I HAVEN'T CONTACTED YOU. YOU HAVE BECOME EVEN PRETTIER THAN YOU WERE LAST TIME WE MET.
YOUR FLATTERY IS PRETTY SKILLFUL.
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU AT ALL LATELY, HAVE YOU BEEN BUSY?
TO TELL THE TRUTH...
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR PRINCESS ELISABETH'S STAND-IN.

FOR ME!?
YOU LOOK DEPRESSED.
YES. FINALLY I HAVE FOUND A SUITABLE CANDIDATE.
...THE GIRL WHO WILL BECOME MY STAND-IN HAS TO BE BY MY SIDE NIGHT AND DAY.
SO I GUESS WE'LL CERTAINLY BECOME FRIENDS.
FOR HER BEING MY SUBSTITUTE, I LACK THE CONFIDENCE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE TWO.
DEEP INSIDE MY HEART, I WAS ALWAYS THINKING THAT IT WOULD BE FINE WITHOUT EVER FINDING SOMEONE
...EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS TO YOU, WHO HAS THE RIGHT OF SUCCESSION TO THE THRONE.

IS SHE THE SAME AGE AS ME?
SAY, HOW MUCH DOES THAT PERSON RESEMBLE ME?
THIS WAY, PLEASE.
I'M SURE IT WON'T BE ME SUCCEEDING TO THE THRONE.
AND I DON'T HOPE FOR IT EITHER.

WH-WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
HE IS THE CANDIDATE FOR YOUR STAND-IN.
WILLIAM!! YOU ARE MAKING FUN OF ME!
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, HE IS A BOY!
BRINGING ME HERE AGAINST MY WILL--THAT'S A CRUEL THING TO SAY!

I'M THE ONE WHO GOT SUDDENLY DRAGGED TO THIS PLACE AND ON TOP OF THAT I'VE BEEN TOLD TO RISK MY LIFE FOR SOME WOMAN I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE!
WATCH YOUR TONGUE!
IF SOMETHING HAPPENS, I'LL DIE IN PLACE OF THIS PRINCESS, WON'T I!?
IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY LITTLE BROTHER, THIS...
ROBERT!!
SO, YOUR NAME'S ROBERT?
GRAB
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
IT'S OK. HE'S RIGHT.
WILLIAM!!

SHOW ME YOUR FACE, PLEASE,
ROBERT.
WE CAN'T BE SURE, BUT HE HAS NO PARENTS AND IT SEEMS LIKE WHEN HE WAS A CHILD, HE AND HIS BROTHER, WHO IS FOUR YEARS YOUNGER, WERE ENTRUSTED TO PEOPLE HERE AND THERE.
FINALLY, THEY CAME TO THE MANAGER OF A SMALL THEATER AND HE STARTED PLAYING ROLES IN SMALLER PLAYS.
BUT CONCERNING THE CANDIDATE FOR A STAND-IN, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE HE COMES FROM.
FOR ME YOU'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR A STAND-IN ALL THESE YEARS.
THANK YOU, WILLIAM.
The make-up was a bit heavy, too...
SURE ENOUGH, WHETHER HE CAN BE USED AS HER STAND---
EVEN IF I THOUGHT THEY RESEMBLE EACH OTHER, IT WAS ONLY ON STAGE...

PLEASE GIVE THIS PERSON MY CLOTHES AND A WIG.
PLEASE SHOW ME HOW YOU LOOK DISGUISED AS ME, ROBERT.
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT THE SHAPE OF HIS FACE IS SIMILAR, BUT...
YOU HAVE TO CONVINCE ME FIRST.
WHO'S GONNA--
HAA--
No, will this be settled with just sending him away?
That's right. If he can win the princess' favor this way, he will be her substitute
but if she decides that he is of no use, he will be sent away...

HE TOLD ME NOT TO WORRY ABOUT MY LI-TTLE BROTHER ...
BUT THAT'S JUST A NICE WAY OF TELLING ME THAT HE'S HELD HOSTAGE!
I WONDER IF THEY'LL LET ME, WHO KNOWS ABOUT THIS AND THAT, RETURN TO MY HOMETOWN JUST LIKE THAT?
SQUEEZE
NORMAL PEOPLE LIKE ME PRACTICALLY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF A STAND-IN.
I was taken to a place where I didn't expect I would be taken to.
HMMM.. THIS IS RATHER...
IT MIGHT ACTUALLY WORK...
IF I WERE TO DISAPPEAR... MY BROTHER WILL...!!
XXX
Robert..

I didn't have the right to choose between life and death anymore.
SO?
I GUESS YOU CAN'T COMPLAIN!
ALL PREPARATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.
IT IS A RATHER GOOD RESULT, ELISABETH.
smile
From the moment the royal family laid their eyes on me
!!
To Be continued...